

WMM2M 41: Bach's *Musical Offering*

As you listen to Episode 41 of the podcast, *What Music Means to Me*, supply the missing information in the blanks provided.

1. J.S. Bach's famous visit to King Frederick the Great of Prussia took place on what date? _____, _____
2. The location of this visit was Frederick's Summer Palace in the town of _____, about 15 miles from the capital city of Berlin.
3. It was the custom in the court of Frederick the Great to bring the day to a close with an evening _____, in the palace's large music room.
4. Frederick's summer palace was named Sanssouci – French for _____.
5. Many celebrated guests (i.e. mathematicians, scientists, philosophers) came to Sanssouci to stay with Frederick, including _____.
6. Although Frederick was a successful military leader, he was also an accomplished _____ and even somewhat of a composer!
7. _____ Bach – 2nd son of J. S. Bach – was employed as court harpsichordist.
8. Organ builder Gottfried Silbermann – a friend of Bach's – had been employed by Frederick to build as many as 15 _____, placed all about the palace, ready for music-making!
9. J. S. Bach was this age on his surprise visit to Frederick at Sanssouci: _____.
10. At this time, Bach was known as a fine organist with a legendary ability to _____.
11. When Bach arrived at Sanssouci, he apologized profusely to the King for his unannounced visit and for the appearance of his _____ travelling clothes after his long journey.
12. After trying out several of Frederick's pianos, Bach asked the King to provide him with a _____ on which to improvise a fugue.
13. Frederick complied, played for Bach a rather tricky, _____ theme that would be tough for any composer to use as a fugue subject.

14. But Bach was up to the challenge: after perhaps a moment or two of thoughtful suspense, he successful did improvise a _____-part fugue.
15. Douglas Hofstadter, in his amazing book, *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid*, explains: "One could probably liken the task of improvising a six-part fugue to the playing of sixty simultaneous _____ games of chess, and winning them all."
16. Weeks later, Bach revisited the king's theme and used it to compose a three-part fugue, a six-part fugue, _____ canons, and a trio sonata. All of this, engraved on a copper plate, printed, and sent to King Frederick as a gift, comprises the masterpiece that came to be known as *The Musical Offering*.
17. The idea of a canon like "Row, Row, Row Your Boar" or "Frere Jacques" is that one single theme is played against itself: a theme enters in the first voice and, after a fixed time-delay, a _____ of it enters, in precisely the same key.
18. Sometimes to make a canon theme harmonize nicely when followed by a copy of itself, the copy must be _____ *higher or lower* by some interval.
19. Other times a canon theme can be fashioned to make musical sense when followed by an *upside down* copy of itself; this is a *canon by* _____.
20. Canon themes that are engineered by the composer to work when played against a *backward copy* of itself are called _____ *canons*.
21. The word "canon" itself means "rule" or _____ and refers to figuring out the key/process that "unlock" a canon.
22. The first of Bach's canons based on the King's theme is labeled "cancrizans" – Latin for _____.
23. An inscription in Latin appears on the title page of the *Musical Offering*. If you take the first letter of each of these Latin words as an acronym, you get the word, _____ (an Italian word meaning "to seek," and the more musically old-fashioned term for the a fugue).
24. Another keyboard work of Bach's that – like the *Musical Offering* – comprehensively works out an idea or concept, includes his (*name one*) _____.
25. Bach signed most of his compositions with the Latin words, *Soli Deo Gloria* – "All to the Glory of _____."